

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01402 161128Z

ACTION NODS-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

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USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 1402

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, LE, IS, MOPS

SUBJ: LEBANESE REQUEST FOR US INTERVENTION

REF: STATE 067498

1. I HAVE TALKED TO BOUTROS ON TELEPHONE AND CONVEYED GIST OF FIRST FIVE PARAGRAPHS REFTEL TO HIM. HE MEETING WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS AND ATTENDING SESSION OF PARLIAMENT AND I WILL NOT HAVE CHANCE FOR FRANK TALK WITH HIM UNTIL LATE IN DAY.

2. IN MEANTIME I WOULD LIKE MAKE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON REQUEST IN PARA 6 THAT WE TRY TO GET FIRMER GRIP ON LEBANESE VIEWS. AGREE THAT IMPLICATION OF LEBANESE POSITION EXPLAINED TO ME LAST NIGHT BY SARKIS AND BOUTROS IS THAT LEBANESE WOULD PREFER PALESTINIANS REMAIN IN SOUTH RATHER THAN MOVING A "FEW MILES" FURTHER NORTH. OF COURSE IN LEBANESE SCALE OF DISTANCES A FEW MILES REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT CHANGE. WHILE LEBANESE WERE UNHAPPY WITH

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SITUATION IN SOUTH, FACT THAT FIGHTING HAD BEEN CONFINED TO BORDER AREA AND FACT THAT PALESTINIAN TROUBLEMAKERS WERE PREOCCUPIED THERE MADE IT TOLERABLE, PARTICULARLY GIVEN EVENTUAL POSSIBILITY OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD RESOLVE PROBLEM.

3. TODAY IN LEBANESE VIEW, WITH LIKELIHOOD OF OVERALL SETTLEMENT INCREASINGLY REMOTE AND WITH ANTICIPATED PALESTINIAN DETERMINATION

TO CARRY FIGHT RIGHT UP TO BORDER ZONE BETWEEN THEM AND ISRAELIS, WHEREVER IT MAY BE ESTABLISHED, THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT THAT LEBANESE INTERNAL SITUATION IS GOING TO BE IMPROVED BY CREATION OF BUFFER ZONE, RATHER IT IS LIKELY TO DETERIORATE. IN FINAL ANALYSIS THERE IS UNLIKELY TO BE PEACE SOUTH OF BEIRUT UNLESS ISRAELIS MOVE ALL THE WAY UP TO BEIRUT ITSELF AND CRUSH THE PALESTINIANS AGAINST THE CHRISTIAN ANVIL. IF THEY TRY IT, SYRIANS UNDOUBTEDLY WILL FEEL CALLED UPON TO INTERVENE BEFORE THAT POINT IS REACHED AND WE WILL HAVE THE NEXT ROUND IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR.

4. IN SUM, LEBANESE WOULD PROBABLY PREFER THAT ISRAELIS ATTACK AREA AGAIN AND AGAIN IN RESPONSE TO NEW PROVOCATIONS RATHER THAN BRING THE ARMED PALESTINIANS CLOSER TO BEIRUT.

5. SO MUCH FOR THE DARK, OR BOUTROS, VIEW OF THE PROBLEM. I AGREE WITH DEPARTMENT THAT IT WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN SITUATION IF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY COULD BE REESTABLISHED AND REASSERTED IN BUFFER ZONE IN SOUTH LEBANON, PARTICULARLY IF THIS WOULD PERMIT THE RETURN OF THE SHIA POPULATION AND SOMETHING COULD BE DONE TO ORGANIZE AND ARM THEM AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS. ESSENTIAL TO THIS ARRANGEMENT, HOWEVER, WOULD BE SYRIAN COMMITMENT TO KEEP PALESTINIANS NORTH OF LITANI UNDER CONTROL. IN THIS RESPECT, I FRANKLY DO NOT SEE HOW TEN KILOMETER BUFFER ZONE IS GOING TO DO THE TRICK. IF ISRAELIS DO NOT MOVE NORTH TO LITANI
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THEY ARE GOING TO LEAVE NO-MAN'S LAND IN WHICH PALESTINIANS WILL BE FREE TO OPERATE.) I WILL DO MY BEST TO CONVINCE BOUTROS THAT GOL SHOULD SUPPORT PROPOSAL FOR USE OF UN'S PEACEKEEPING MACHINERY AS AT LEAST BEING A NEW ELEMENT WHICH COULD BRING ABOUT MARKED IMPROVEMENT AND WHICH IN ANY EVENT WOULD LEAVE THEM IN POSITION NO WORSE THAN THEY ARE ALREADY IN, BOUTROS REACTION IS GOING TO DEPEND IN PART UPON WHETHER ISRAELIS WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A PROPOSITION. HE MAY ALSO BE INFLUENCED BY SYRIAN ATTITUDE. I THEREFORE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE RESULTS OF CHARGE VIETS DISCUSSION WITH BEGIN IN ACCORDANCE STATE 67617. REQUEST THAT REPORT OF THAT CONVERSATION BE SENT TO US WITH FLASH PRECEDENCE. WILL OF COURSE BE REPORTING MY CONVERSATION WITH BOUTROS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
PARKER

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NNN

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